

had doubtless indulged, and in which, though still clogged by the leadership of 1834, he may yet find fame for himself and salvation for his country.' These last words -are probably nothing more than conventional homage to a leader whom the writer still acknowledged, and one seems to detect in them that note of grave irony which is so often heard from Disraeli. When they were written in 1844 Disraeli was well aware that Peel was not the man for a great constructive work such as the formation of a Conservative party on a comprehensive basis. He had already come to see that the Tamworth manifesto was an attempt to construct a party without principles ; its basis ' Latitudinarianism' ; its inevitable consequence * Political Infidelity.'

There was indeed a considerable shouting about what they called Conservative principles; but the awkward question naturally arose, what will you conserve? The prerogatives of the Crown, provided they are not exercised; the independence of the House of Lords, provided it is not asserted ; the Ecclesiastical estate, provided it is regulated by a commission of laymen. Everything, in short, that is established, as long as it is a phrase and not a fact.¹

Peel, in fact, was a political opportunist, disinterested and therefore with a certain nobility in his opportunism, but still essentially an opportunist, a man who lived without ideas. Disraeli, if any one will have it so, may in the stress of practical politics have sunk at times to an opportunism that was less disinterested than Peel's, and therefore more ignoble ; but he was never without ideas or the courage to follow their guidance. He had what Peel signally lacked, the creative mind, and for him therefore was reserved the task at which Peel so disastrously failed.

Between men so different in temperament and in mental constitution antagonism from the first was perhaps almost inevitable. A division of tendency soon

¹ *Coningsby*, Bk. II. ch. 5.